

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 04619 01 OF 02 022319Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----022321Z 044895 /65
O 022301Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3678

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 04619

EXDIS/STADIS (NO DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE EUR/CAN)//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS
SUBJECT: FISHERIES - MEETING BETWEEN FISHERIES MINISTER
ROMEO LEBLANC AND CONGRESSMAN DON BONKER

1. SUMMARY: FISHERIES MINISTER ROMEO LEBLANC TOLD CONGRESSMAN DON BONKER DURING MAY 27 MEETING IN OTTAWA THAT B.C. SALMON FISHERMAN ARE SO SERIOUSLY VEXED WITH RESTRICTIONS MANDATED BY PACIFIC REGIONAL COUNCIL THAT THEY ARE PUTTING EXTREME PRESSURE ON GOC AND AS RESULT LONG-TERM AGREEMENT IS IN JEOPARDY. MR. BONKER STRESSED NEED FOR SOLUTION OF PROBLEM THROUGH COOPERATIVE U.S.-CANADAIN EFFORT TO EXPAND SALMON POOL THEREBY PROVIDING ENOUGH FISH FOR ALL. AT CONCLUSION OF MEETING AFTER LEBLANC'S DEPARTURE FOR CABINET MEETING,GOC FISHERIES NEGOTIATOR LEN LEGAULT TOLD BONKER THAT GOC MIGHT CONSIDER RESTRICTING ACCESS OF U.S. FISHERMEN TO B. C. SHRIMP FISHERY IN ORDER TO RESTORE RECIPROCITY DAMAGED BY PACIFIC COUNCIL'S SALMON TROLLING REGS. END SUMMARY.

2. CONGRESSMAN BONKER VISITED OTTAWA MAY 27 TO ATTEND ANGLO-NORTH AMERICAN INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON AFRICA. AT CONGRESSMAN'S REQUEST EMBASSY ARRANGED MEETINGS WITH GOC OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS WEST COAST FISHERIES PROBLEM AND PROPOSALS TO TRANSSHIP ALASKAN
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OIL THROUGH B.C.

3. CONGRESSMAN'S SCHEDULE OF TALKS WITH GOC OFFICIALS INCLUDED 40-MINUTE EARLY MORNING MEETING WITH FISHERIES AND ENVIRONMENT MINISTER ROMEO LEBLANC REGARDING PROBLEMS OF WEST COAST SALMON TROLL FISHERY. EMBASSY MADE INITIAL CONTACT AT WORKING LEVEL REQUESTING MEETING WITH FISHERIES

NEGOTIATOR LEN LEGAULT. MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING WAS AT LEBLANC'S INITIATIVE. LEGAULT AND FISHERIES OFFICIALS MIKE SHEPARD AND DICK ROBERTS ALSO ATTENDED MEETING AS DID EMBOFF.

4. LEBLANC OPENED MEETING BY EXPRESSING SERIOUS CONCERN ABOUT SALMON TROLLING REGULATIONS DRAFTED BY PACIFIC REGIONAL COUNCIL. HE SAID THAT AS A RESULT OF RESTRICTIONS REGULATIONS PLACED ON CANADIAN SALMON FISHERMEN, ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING POSSIBILITIES FOR LONG-TERM AGREEMENT IS DETERIORATING. HE SAID "IT WILL TAKE A HELL OF A LOT OF WORK TO CONVINCE HIS CONSTITUENTS THAT THEY ARE NOT BEING HAD," AND NEW U.S. REGULATIONS ARE CAUSING "PSYCHOLOGICAL RESISTANCE TO ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSENSUS IN SUPPORT OF BILATERAL AGREEMENT." THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, HE SAID, MIGHT IMPOSE A VETO ON ANY POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING AGREEMENT.

5. CONGRESSMAN BONKER REPLIED THAT ACHIEVEMENT OF AGREEMENT WILL CHALLENGE DIPLOMATIC SKILLS OF LEADERS ON BOTH SIDES. HE SAID THAT THE RECENT BOLDT DECISION PREVENTED ACHIEVEMENT OF ANY CONSENSUS IN WASHINGTON STATE ON RESPECTIVE FISHING RIGHTS OF INDIANS, COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN AND SPORTSMEN. SOLUTION MUST BE FOUND BY PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE RESOURCE TO BENEFIT OF ALL CONCERNED THROUGH GOVERNMENT FUNDED PROGRAMS. THIS POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN FRUSTRATED BY LACK OF CONSENSUS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND B.C. FISHERMEN. IF EMOTIONAL "FISHING RIGHTS" ISSUE COULD BE SET ASIDE PROGRESS COULD BE MADE

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TOWARD ENHANCING RESOURCE TO BENEFIT OF BOTH B.C. AND WASHINGTON STATE FISHERMEN. OBSTACLE SEEMS TO BE ARGUMENT BY SOME WASHINGTON FISHERMEN THAT INVESTMENT IN EXPANDING RESOURCE SHOULD NOT BE MADE IF ALL OR BULK OF FISH WILL GO TO B. C. FISHERMEN. CONGRESSMAN SAID HE COULD NOT IMAGINE THAT SITUATION IS HOPELESS AND THAT THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO REACH A COMPATIBLE JOINT U.S.-CANADIAN MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

6. LEGAULT AT THIS POINT SAID, THAT IS WHAT CANADIANS HAVE BEEN SAYING THROUGHOUT SHORT-TERM FISHERIES AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS; REGIONAL COUNCIL, HE SAID, HAS ACTED PREMATURELY AND HAS PLACED EXCESSIVE RESTRICTIONS ON CANADIAN FISHERMEN IN WASHINGTON STATE WATERS. HE STRESSED THAT NEW U.S. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACT IS A GOOD LAW BUT IS NOT SUITABLE TO MANAGING AN INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES RELATIONSHIP. GOC, HE SAID, IS FRUSTRATED BECAUSE IT HAS NO ONE TO TALK TO. IT CANNOT NEGOTIATE WITH REGIONAL COUNCIL BECAUSE IT IS NOT A SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT.

7. CONGRESSMAN BONKER REPLIED THAT U.S. COMMERCE DEPT. COULD HAVE ALTERED THE MANAGEMENT PLAN BUT DID NOT WANT TO INTERVENE, IN EFFECT CANCELLING LOCAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS MANDATED BY NEW FISHERIES ACT AT VERY OUTSET. CONGRESSMAN WENT ON TO POINT OUT THAT CENTRAL PROBLEM IS NOT FISHERIES MANAGEMENT ACT OR ITS PROVISIONS FOR LOCAL DECISION-MAKING BY REGIONAL COUNCILS PER SE BUT CONSTRAINTS PLACED ON REGIONAL COUNCIL BY BOLDT DECISION; NOW, HE SAID, WE MUST ATTEMPT TO WORK AROUND BOLDT DECISION

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----022328Z 045011 /65

O 022301Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3679

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AND FIND WAYS IN WHICH BOTH GOVERNMENTS, CANADIAN AND U.S., CAN COOPERATE TO ENHANCE RESOURCE, THUS MAKING AMPLE QUANTITIES OF FISH AVAILABLE TO ALL PARTICIPANTS IN THE FISHERY, COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN, SPORTS FISHERMEN AND INDIANS. I AM HERE IN OTTAWA DISCUSSING THIS PROBLEM WITH YOU, MR. BONKER SAID, BECAUSE IT IS NOW UP TO CONGRESS TO EXERCISE LEADERSHIP IN THIS EFFORT BECAUSE COMMERCE DEPARTMENT CANNOT DO SO.

8. AT THIS POINT LEBALANCE EXCUSED HIMSELF AND DEPARTED FOR CABINET MEETING. HIS PARTING COMMENT WAS THAT GOC COULD NOT ACQUIESCE IN ANY AGREEMENT THAT VIOLATES EXISTING RECIPROCAL FISHING ARRANGEMENTS.

9. CANADIANS, ESPECIALLY MIKE SHEPARD, ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORTED MR. BONKER'S PROPOSAL SAYING THAT TWO GOVERNMENTS MUST NOT FOCUS ON DIVIDING FISHERY RESOURCE BUT RATHER COOPERATE BY ENHANCING PRODUCTION TO MAXIMIZE POOL OF FISH AVAILABLE TO ALL, BUT, SHEPARD ADDED, FIRST STEP SHOULD NOT BE TO CROWD OUT CANADIAN FISHERMEN FROM

WASHINGTON STATE WATERS AS REGIONAL COUNCIL'S REGULATIONS
NOW DO.

10. CONGRESSMAN BONKER SAID BEST FIRST STEP TOWARD
COOPERATION IN ENHANCING RESOURCE WOULD BE TO ARRANGE A
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MEETING IN WASHINGTON BETWEEN MINISTER LEBLANC, CANADIAN
FISHERIES OFFICIALS, USG OFFICIALS AND INTERESTED CON-
GRESSMEN TO THRASH THIS PROBLEM OUT. BOLDT DECISION,
HE SAID, IS A MUTUAL FACT AND WE HAVE TO WORK AROUND
IT. WE MUST FIND OTHER WAYS TO PASS RECIPROCAL BENEFITS
TO CANADIAN FISHERMEN BUT U.S. FISHERMEN WILL RESIST THIS
UNLESS SAME BENEFITS ACCRUE TO THEM. CONGRESSMEN BONKER
SAID THAT HE WOULD DRAFT A PAPER OUTLINING THE POLITICAL
AND LEGAL REALITIES OF U.S. SALMON FISHING PICTURE AND
SUGGESTED THAT CANADIANS DO SAME AS PREPARATION FOR ABOVE
MEETING.

11. DURING LESS FORMAL CONVERSATION AROUND MAP TABLE
AT CONCLUSION OF MEETING LEGAULT MADE SPECIAL POINT OF
SAYING THAT CANADIANS MIGHT LIMIT ACCESS BY AMERICAN
FISHERMEN TO FISHERIES OTHER THAN SALMON OFF B.C. COAST (E.G.
SHRIMP) AS MEANS OF REDRESSING LACK OF RECIPROCITY
INHERENT IN U.S. SALMON TROLLING REGS.
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12. FOREGOING REPORT OF CONVERSATION IS BASED ON INFORMAL
NOTES TAKEN BY EMBOFF WHO ATTENDED MEETING. IT HAS NOT
REPEAT NOT BEEN CLEARED BY CONGRESSMAN BONKER. IT SHOULD
BE TREATED WITH GREATEST DISCRETION. EMBASSY IS SENDING
CONGRESSMAN BONKER TEXT AS DRAFT MEMCON FOR CLEARANCE
AND SUCH DISTRIBUTION AS CONGRESSMAN DECIDES. ENDERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FISHING AGREEMENTS, FISHING REGULATIONS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977OTTAWA04619
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770197-0539
Format: TEL
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770698/aaaadhqh.tel
Line Count: 207
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 53094186-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2304578
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FISHERIES - MEETING BETWEEN FISHERIES MINISTER ROMEO LEBLANC AND CONGRESSMAN DON BONKER
TAGS: EFIS, CA, US, ZN, (BONKER, DON), (LEBLANC, ROMEO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/53094186-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009